

A VICTIM'S STORY

Gunshot ends basketball player's career



Photo courtesy of gobroncs.com

Sophomore Vesna Dzombic was struck by a bullet in the leg during Thursday's shooting. Dzombic and her family came to this country from Bosnia two years ago as refugees of war. The gunshot ended her basketball career.

By Jared Vichko
Sports Editor

The American dream wasn't supposed to be like this. For a foreigner who fled a war-torn country, the United States was supposed to be a safe haven.

Try explaining that to Vesna Dzombic, the Rider sophomore who was struck by a bullet during the Oct. 17 shooting.

Dzombic, who came to America from Bosnia, sought a safer lifestyle in the U.S.A.

"My parents and I moved here two years ago," said Dzombic. "They wanted us to go to school and have a better life."

Dzombic, a guard on the basketball team, was recruited by Rider while playing basketball for Athens Area High School in Pennsylvania.

As a freshman, she saw limited action last year due to a back injury. The injury plagued her again this season, forcing her to redshirt.

Dzombic and the rest of her team attended the Intercultural Greek Council (IGC) event last Thursday as guests of honor. The event was labeled as a pre-MAACness party, and the men's and women's basketball teams got in free.

Dzombic didn't see the shooter, she said. She only felt the pain in her leg.

"I felt the shot hit me," she said. "I was awake the whole time. I didn't see who did it, but I didn't even cry."

Head Coach Eldon Price can attest to her high tolerance for pain.

"She is a tough young lady," she said. "She is back in the classroom already. She is very dedicated to her future."

The bullet shattered her femur,

leaving her unable to play basketball ever again.

Her teammates are sad because they are losing more than a fellow athlete.

"She is a great teammate and person," said junior Katie Hall. "She's hilarious and real funny. She has a great sense of humor and she can always make us smile."

That great sense of humor is apparent to others as well.

"Her personality is very contagious," said Price. "She is very likeable. Her credibility is a tribute to her enthusiasm."

Her father fought in the Bosnian army from 1992-1995 in the former Yugoslav Republic, a war that claimed the life of his brother, Dzombic's uncle.

Dzombic's family arrived in Akron, Ohio, in July 2001. They were helped by assistance from a local refugee agency, which set up housing and forms of financial aid.

"My parents were real upset when they heard about the shooting," said Dzombic. "They were concerned and wanted to know if I was OK."

Dzombic is determined not to let the injury control her life.

"I'm still going to graduate," said Dzombic. "I want to find a job, get married and have kids. I'm not going to let this stop me from achieving my goals."

Cross Country improves as season progresses

By Mathew J. Schreiber
Staff Writer

The men's and women's cross country teams are improving its placing in meets this month.

"They are working really hard," said Bob Hammer, head cross country coach. "We have new attitude with good results. Most of them are running one minute faster than last year."

"Everybody is doing great and they are ecstatic about the team going in the right direction, putting ourselves in good position for the MAAC meet," he added.

Rider opened October by running in the Paul Short Invitational. The men placed 22 out of 23 teams and the

women placed 23 out of 23 teams.

During the race, Matt Catinella placed 106 out of 157 runners with a time of 26:28. Bob Broomhead placed 136 with a time of 27:27 and Brendan Gildea placed 104 with a time of 27:45. In this race, Georgetown finished first, Princeton finished second and James Madison finished third.

In the Paul Short Invitational, Kate Henniger placed 140 out of 158 runners with a time of 24:17. In addition, sophomore Jennifer Williams finished 142 with a time of 24:21, Elizabeth Bond placed 143 with a time of 24:50 and freshman Jennifer Lee finished 153.

In the women's meet Georgetown placed first, West Virginia finished second and Tennessee placed third.

In their next meet, the team hosted the Rider Invitational. The men placed third and the women placed fourth out of five teams.

Catinella placed fifth with a time of 26:23. Broomhead finished 12 with a time of 27:12 and Gildea finished in 19 with a time of 27:35.

"Last year we got embarrassed pretty badly," said Catinella. "This year not only did I have a personal record, the entire team ran faster at this meet. We contributed the meet

See 'Runners' page 10

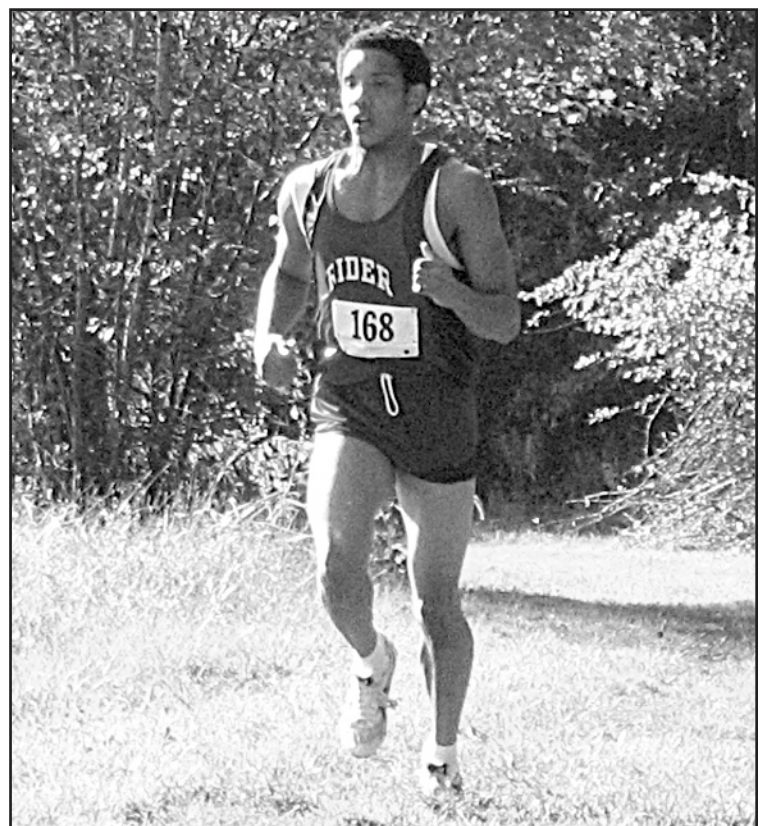


Photo by Hugh Tsung

Sophomore Jeff Stout runs at the Rider Invitational. The team has run well during the month of October.